

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-05 AID-05
IO-14 /072 W
-----022811 171650Z /43

O 171529Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5671
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 7148

E.O. 11(02): NA
TAGS: SOPN, EG, SY
SUBJECT: SADAT AND ASSAD PRESS CONFERENCE

1. SADAT GAVE FULL SCALE PRESS CONFERENCE MORNING NOVEMBER 12
AND ASSAD ANSWERED REPORTERS QUESTIONS AT AIRPORT AFTER
SADAT'S DEPARTURE. WE HAVE BRIEF READOUT FROM US NEWSMEN
OF SADAT'S Q'S AND A'S, ALTHOUGH HIS COMMENTS WERE IN
ARABIC, AND RADIO TRANSCRIPT OF SOME OF ASSAD'S COMMENTS.

2. SADAT OPENED WITH STATEMENT THAT PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD DOES
NOT AGREE WITH SADAT'S INTENTION TO GO TO ISRAEL. (COMMENT:
ASSAD DID NOT RPT NOT ATTEND SADAT'S CONFERENCE.) SADAT
SAID THIS WAS ASSAD'S CONVICTION AND HIS RIGHT. THIS DOES
NOT MEAN THERE IS A RIFT BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS. SADAT
SAID HE WAS GOING TO ISRAEL BECAUSE HE WAS TIRED OF HEARING
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THE CONSISTENT ISRAELI COMPLAINT EVERY TIME THERE IS A NEED
FOR FLEXIBILITY THAT ISRAEL CANNOT TRUST ARAB INTENTIONS.
SADAT SAID HE IS GOING TO ISRAEL TO TELL THEM IN THEIR
OWN "DEN" THAT IF THEY WANT TO LIVE IN THIS PART OF
THE WORLD THEY MUST FACE UP TO SOME FACTS. SADAT
IS GOING TO PUT THESE FACTS BEFORE THE ISRAELIS
IN THE KNESSET. SADAT SAID THAT THE ALTERNATIVE

TO PEACE IN THE AREA IS HORRIBLE FOR BOTH THE ISRAELIS AND THE ARABS. ASKED IF HE WAS GOING TO GO TO SAUDI ARABIA TO EXPLAIN HIS VISIT TO ISRAEL, SADAT REPLIED THAT KING KHALID IS A BROTHER AND THERE IS NO NEED TO BOTHER WITH SUCH EXPLANATIONS. SADAT SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN THINKING OF THIS MOVE FOR SOME TIME, BUT IT CRYSTALIZED IN HIS THINKING AFTER HIS RECENT TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN, AND ROMANIA. NEVERTHELESS, SADAT DENIED THAT ANYONE KNEW OF HIS PROPOSAL FOR A VISIT TO ISRAEL BEFORE HIS PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY SPEECH OTHER THAN VICE PRESIDENT MUBARAK

AND FONMIN FAHMY. SADAT CONCLUDED THAT HIS MISSION WAS A SACRED ONE AND REITERATED HIS BELIEF THAT THE ALTERNATIVE TO PEACE WAS TOO HORRIBLE TO CONTEMPLATE.

3. FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF ASSAD'S MEETING WITH THE PRESS: (TRANSLATED FROM 1215Z DAMASCUS DOMESTIC SERVICE.)

Q. CAN YOU EXPLAIN YOUR DISAPPROVAL OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL?

A. I WOULD LIKE TO SAY FIRST THAT WHEN WE USED TO MEET, WE USED TO FIND AGREEMENT BUT NOT THIS TIME, FOR WE CAME OUT OF OUR ENCOUNTER IN DISAGREEMENT WHICH MAKES ME FEEL DEEP SORROW, PARTICULARLY SINCE OUR DISAGREEMENT

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WAS ON AN IMPORTANT MATTER, NAMELY, PRES. SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL. I AM EXTREMELY SAD THAT I COULDN'T CONVINCE HIM OF THE GRAVITY OF THIS VISIT, AND ITS FAR REACHING IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR ARAB CAUSE, AND FOR THE ARAB SITUATION. NATURALLY, YOU CAN IMAGINE THAT THIS MATTER DOMINATED OUR TALKS.

Q. WAS YOUR DISAGREEMENT WITH PRESIDENT SADAT OVER TACTICS OR OVER STRATEGY, I.E., WAS YOUR FAILURE TO REACH AGREEMENT A DIFFERENCE OVER REACHING THE GOAL OR EVEN THE GOAL ITSELF?

A. IT IS NOT EASY TO SEPARATE BETWEEN TACTICS AND STRATEGY. SO IF IT IS CORRECT TO SAY THAT PEACE CONSTITUTES STRATEGY AND THE ROAD TO PEACE CONSTITUTES TACTICS, A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN TACTICS AND STRATEGY IS NOT POSSIBLE. OUR TALKS YESTERDAY INVOLVED THIS TO SOME EXTENT AND I RECKONED THAT SUCCESSFUL METHODS ARE THOSE WHICH ACHIEVE THE GOAL WHICH WE CAN CALL SUCCESSFUL, IF SUCH A PHRASE IS CORRECT. PEACE IS A GOAL FOR WHICH WE STRIVE AND WORK, BUT ONE SHOULD SEEK METHODS THAT CAN LEAD US TO THIS PEACE. IT IS NOT NATURAL TO SEPARATE TACTICS AND STRATEGY. SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY CANNOT COME ABOUT THROUGH

UNSUCCESSFUL TACTICS. PEACE IS AN OBJECTIVE AS FAR AS WE IN SYRIA ARE CONCERNED, AND IT IS A GOAL FOR OUR BROTHERS IN EGYPT AND THE ARAB NATIONS. BUT AS I SEE IT WORK TOWARDS PEACE DOES NOT REQUIRE A VISIT TO ISRAEL.

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Q. IF WE SUPPOSE MR. PRESIDENT THAT THIS VISIT ACHIEVES SOME SUCCESS IS IT POSSIBLE THAT SYRIA WILL CHANGE ITS CURRENT VIEWPOINT IN LIGHT OF WHAT THIS VISIT WOULD INVOLVE REGARDING ACHIEVEMENTS TOWARDS A JUST AND COMPREHENSIVE PEACE WHICH SYRIA AND THE ARAB NATIONS DEMAND?

A. IN FACT, MY DISCUSSIONS ON THE MATTER WITH PRESIDENT SADAT WERE LENGTHY AND WE COULD SAY WIDE-RANGING. I STRESSED MY CONVICTION THAT THIS VISIT WILL NOT ACHIEVE FOR US A GTDL THAT SERVES OUR INTEREST AS AN ARAB NATION, NEITHER IN SYRIA NOR IN EGYPT, NOR IN THE OTHER ARAB REGIONS. OF COURSE, PRESIDENT SADAT HAD A DIFFERENT OPINION AND NATURALLY OUR CONCERN FOR SISTER EGYPT WILL CONTINUE JUST AS IT ALWAYS HAS, LIKE OUR CONCERN FOR OURSELVES. THIS IS, OF COURSE, CERTAIN.

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Q. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE MESSAGE HANDED TO YOU BY THE LIBYAN ENVOY?

A. I PREFER THAT YOU BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THIS FROM OUR LIBYAN BROTHERS.

Q. IF EGYPT HAS DEFINED ITS TACTICS IN REGARD TO THE COMING STAGE WHAT ARE SYRIA'S TACTICS FOR THIS STAGE IN ORDER TO REACH THE GOALS OUTLINED?

A. WE ARE ALWAYS STRIVING TO FIND THE APPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL FOR WHICH WE ASPIRE, AND UNTIL NOW WE HAVE NO NEW TACTICS OR METHODS OF ACTION. FOR YEARS WE HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING WELL-DEFINED METHODS KNOWN TO OUR ARAB CITIZENS AND THE WORLD. WE HAVEN'T CHANGED ANYTHING SO FAR.

Q. SO YOU ARE NOT YET HOPELESS ABOUT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE?

A. THE POSITION, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROCESS AND WITHIN THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF THE METHODS, CANNOT BE ASSESSED AS AN INDEPENDENT SUBJECT. WE DID NOT MODIFY THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF ACTIONS, OF THE PROCESS AND THE METHODS, AS I JUST SAID.

Q. SO, ARE YOU GOING TO GENEVA?

A. AS YOU SEE WE ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF DEBATING A NEW TOPIC, AND IT IS ILLOGICAL FOR US TO SAY DIRECTLY WHAT THE IMPACT OF THIS NEW POSITION ON THE NEXT STAGE OF ACTION WILL BE. THIS SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AND STUDIED CAREFULLY; AND THEREFORE, AS I HAVE BEEN SAYING, WE ARE IN A FRAMEWORK OF SPECIFIC ACTION OF WHICH WE HAVEN'T CHANGED ANYTHING THUS FAR, BUT THIS NEW SITUATION WILL COMPEL US TO CONDUCT

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A THOROUGH RESTUDY AND REEXAMINATION, IN LIGHT OF WHICH NEW RESULTS WILL BE ATTAINED.

Q. DON'T YOU THINK THAT THIS DISAGREEMENT WOULD PREJUDICE OR AFFECT ARAB SOLIDARITY AS A WHOLE?

A. AS YOU KNOW WE USED TO STRESS THAT SOLIDARITY IS AN EFFECTIVE FORMULA TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE ARAB NATIONS, AND THE SEARCH IS CONTINUING TO SEEK EFFECTIVE FORMULAS.

Q. DID YOU SPECIFICALLY ASK PRESIDENT SADAT NOT TO GO TO ISRAEL; AND IF HE WAS GOING ANYWAY, DID YOU ASK HIM NOT TO CONCLUDE A SEPARATE DEAL WITH ISRAEL? AND DID YOU RECEIVE FROM HIM AN ASSURANCE HE WOULD NOT INCLUDE SUCH A DEAL?

A. PRESIDENT SADAT DECLARED THAT HE WOULD NOT CONCLUDE A SEPARATE PEACE BEFORE HE CAME TO DAMASCUS. BUT HE AND I DID NOT DEAL WITH THE MATTER FROM THIS ANGLE AND I DID NOT THINK THAT THE GRAVITY OF THE MATTER IS IN THE PROSPECT OF CONCLUDING A SEPARATE PEACE AGREEMENT, EVEN IF THIS MATTER WAS NOT DENIED BY PRES. SADAT. BUT I LOOKED AT THE MATTER FROM OTHER ANGLES; FROM THE ANGLE OF ITS VARYING EFFECTS ON ARAB ACTION, ON THE ARAB CAUSE, AND ON ACHIEVING THE GOAL OF PEACE, IN PARTICULAR.

4. THE ONLY SECTION OF SADAT'S PRESS CONFERENCE REPORTED ON THE 12:15Z NEWS BROADCAST WAS THE FOLLOWING: "IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE HELD BEFORE NOON TODAY AT THE GUEST PALACE, PRESIDENT SADAT ANNOUNCED THAT PRESIDENT ASSAD DID NOT APPROVE OF HIS GOING TO ISRAEL. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION WHETHER HE HAD INFORMED PRES. ASSAD OF HIS INTENTION TO GO TO ISRAEL IN ADVANCE, SADAT ANSWERED IN THE NEGATIVE."

MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
Decapton Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decapton Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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TAGS: SOPN, EG, SY, (SADAT, ANWAR), (AL-ASSAD, HAFIZ)
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